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REMARKS

Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

It is not believed that the §112, second paragraph rejection apply to the presently pending claims.

Claims 22-36 were rejected under §102(b) or §103(a) over Suzuki. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The quantitative specifications of the material component in the specification of this patent refer to the substance quantities which must be brought together before the sintering in order to obtain the material and these are given in percent by weight. Only in claims 7 and 8 are the quantities of the alpha and beta SiAlONs specified in relation to the sintered body and given in percent by volume. The quantities in the application in claim 37 refer to the composition and to the evaluation of the analysis of the sintered material in the interior.

According to Suzuki, the alpha SiAlON gradient is generated according to another method than according to the presently claimed invention. The sintered bodies according to Suzuki are sintered in special containers of silicon nitride or carbon. According to the method disclosed in the PCT publication, a green body of beta SiAlON is placed into an alpha SiAlON powder in order to obtain the corresponding alpha SiAlON surface.

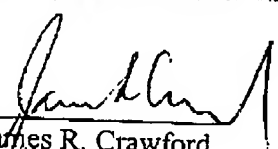
In contrast, in the material according to the invention the gradient formation takes place by controlling the cooling of the sintered body or through reaction of the surface with the provided atmosphere. This is a difference of the presently claimed invention with respect to the method and composition of Suzuki.

In view of the foregoing, allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 50-0624, under Order No. NY-DNAG-314-US.

Respectfully submitted

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